PAGE 1

1.5 (C)

DENIED IN FULL

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(294)

PAGE 002 UF 007

1.5 (c)

COMMENT:

GENERAL CESAR B E N A V I D E S,

WHO WAS CHANGED FROM MINISTER OF INTERIOR TO MINISTER OF DEFENSE,

WAS UPSET BECAUSE

HIS REMOVAL AS MINISTER OF

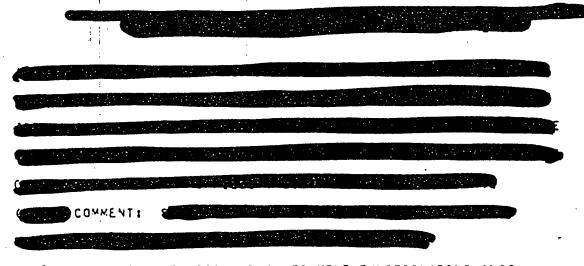
INTERIOR COULD BE INTERPRETED AS CRITICISM FOR THE WAY HE

HANDLED THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE ISSUANCE OF FALSE PASSPORTS

IN THE ORLANDO L E T E L I E R CASE.

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3. SOME ARMY LEADERS AND GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONARIES ALSO
CRITICIZED THE AMNESTY ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNMENT. THEY
FYPRESSED THE OPINION THAT THE AMNESTY PEFLECTED GOVERNMENT
MEAKNESS IN THE FACE OF THE PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM THE
INVESTIGATION INTO THE LETELIER ASSASSINATION. THEY BELIEVE THAT
THE GOVERNMENT CAVED IN TO PRESSUPE FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WITH
A RESULTANT LOSS OF INDEPENDENCE. THEY ALSO EXPRESSED THE
GPINION THAT THE AMNESTY MOULD TRIGGER A LOT OF PROBLEMS BECAUSE
MARXIST ELEMENTS AND OTHER RADICALS MOULD BECOME POLITIACLLY
ACTIVE ONCE AGAIN.

BRIEFED

ON THE AMNESTY. THEY TOLD THE GROUP THAT THERE WERE
THREE BASIC REASONS FOR TAKING THIS MEASURE:

- A. TO IMPROVE CHILE'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE.
- B. TO REDUCE INTERNAL POLITICAL UNREST AND DEVELOP A MORE PEACEFUL INTERNAL CLIMATE.

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C. TO AVOID ANY TRIALS AFFECTING MILITARY PERSONNEL OR MEMBERS OF CHILEAN SECURITY SERVICES MHO COULD BE ACCUSED OF BEING INVOLVED IN POLITICAL INCIDENTS DURING THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS.

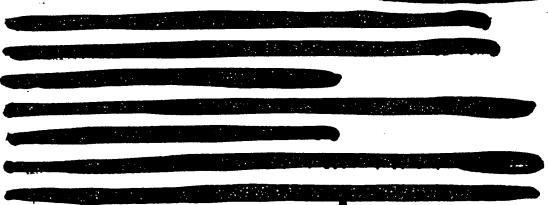
PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ANY ILLEGAL DINA OPERATIONS, OTHER THAN

POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT IN THE LETELIER ASSASSINATION, WHICH WAS

SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDED FROM THE TERMS OF THE AMNESTY.



6. A LARGE NUMBER OF INFLUENTIAL CIVILIAN SUPPORTERS OF THE GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING FORMER CONSERVATIVE POLITICIANS AND LEADING PROFESSIONALS AND BUSINESSMEN, ARE CRITICAL OF RECENT ACTIONS TAKEN BY PRESIDENT PINOCHET AS BEING TOO OPENLY DESIGNED TO CURRY FAVOR WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.



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THERE HAS ALSO BEEN WIDESPREAD

CIRITICISM OF THE PRESIDENT FOR THE HASTY MANNER IN WHICH A KEY

SUSPECT IN THE LETELIER ASSASSINATION, WHO HAD ADMITTEDLY WORKED

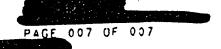
FOR THE DINA, WAS TURNED OVER TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.

- ARE BEGINNING TO BELIEVE THAT THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT, THROUGH
 THE DINA, WAS IN FACT INVOLVED IN THE ASSASSINATION OF LETELIER,
 WASED ON THE FACTS WHICH HAVE EMERGED IN RECENT WEEKS. THE
 OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THESE INDIVIDUALS, ALTHOUGH SUPPORTERS
 THE GOVERNMENT, DO NOT AGREE THAT THIS TYPE OF ACTION SHOULD
 HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT BY THE GOVERNMENT. MANY OF THESE
 INDIVIDUALS ALSO BELIEVE THAT PINOCHET'S RECENT ACTIONS, OPENLY
 DESIGNED TO PLEASE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, DEMONSTRATE HIS GROWING
 WEAKNESS, AND INDICATE THAT PINOCHET IS AWARE THAT FIRM EVIDENCE
 OF DINA COMPLICITY IN THE LETELIER ASSASSINATION WILL SURFACE AS
 THE INVESTIGATION PROCEEDS.
 - 8. THE MAJORITY OF CIVILIAN LEADERS BELIEVE THAT PRESIDENT PINOCHET WILL BE FORCED OUT OF OFFICE IF FIRM EVIDENCE SURFACES THAT DIMA WAS BEHIND THE LETELIER ASSASSINATION. THEY BELIEVE THAT PINOCHET HAS BEEN TOO CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH FORMER DIMA HEAD GENERAL (R) MANUEL C O N T R E R A S TO SURVIVE SUCH A REVELATION. THERE HAS ALREADY BEEN SOME SPECULATION ABOUT

SE RET



BELIEVE THAT THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT DID NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE ASSASSINATION OF LETELIER. HOWEVER, IF DINA'S INVOLVEMENT BECOMES CONFIRMED BY SUBSEQUENT TESTIMONY IN THIS CASE, PINOCHET WOULD LOSE THE SUPPORT OF A MAJORITY OF ARMY LEADERS AND WOULD BE FORCED FROM OFFICE. THE MAJORITY OF ARMY LEADERS WOULD NOT AGREE THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THIS TYPE OF VIOLENT ACTION. IN THE EVENT PINOCHET WERE TO BE FORCED FROM OFFICE THERE ARE FOUR ARMY LEADERS WHO WOULD BE THE MOST LIKELY TO REPLACE HIM: GENERAL CARLOS FOR ESTIER, VICE-COMMANDER OF THE ARMY; GENERAL WASHINGTON CARRASSON, CHIEF OF ARMY GENERAL STAFF;



GENERAL BENAVIDES AND GENERAL TORO. GENERAL TORO PROBABLY WOULD BE THE MOST ACCEPTABLE CANDIDATE AMONG THIS GROUP TO OTHER MILITARY SERVICES AND TO CIVILIAN SUPPORTERS OF THE GOVERNMENT.)

10. (EMBASSY COMMENT: FOR EMBASSY ANALYSIS OF THIS

GENERAL SUBJECT SEE SANTIAGO EMB TEL 2976 OF APRIL 20, 1978.

SPECIFICALLY, REGARDING THIS REPORT, AE WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT

THAT BRADY, WHILE PERSONALLY PIQUED AT PINOCHET, IS NOT A

HARDLINER. ME WOULD ALSO LIKE TO UNDERLINE THAT THE RECENT

AMNESTY SEEMS TO BE DESIGNED TO ALSO PREVENT FUTURE TALK OF

ANY MILITARY ACCUSED OF MURDER OR TORTURE BETWEEN SEPTEBER 11,

1973 AND APRIL 1978.)

11. (c)